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CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

602 476 THE primary economic units in Nyakyusa society are the kinship groups—the elementary family, the cattle-owing lineage, and the group of cognates who co-operate in production and exchange many gifts, and among whom cattle circulate.[1] However, fellow villagers also work together, exchange food, and have a common interest in certain property.

a. Land

423 245 The village is the land-holding group. As we have seen, land is allocated to a boys' village, at its commencement, by the parent village, that is the village to which the fathers of most of the boys belong. Little boys' huts are usually to be seen going up on a strip of pasture-land, adjoining the block of banana groves which shroud their fathers' houses. The boys' land is primarily a building site, but very soon after moving into their huts they turn over the ground and plant banana suckers (*vide* Plate II). Bananas begin to bear very quickly, and so in a little more than a year after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have, as yet, no fields, for the cultivation of fields requires the co-operation of a wife. Bachelors continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village. As the boys grow up and marry they begin to cultivate garden-land adjacent to their village. Some of these gardens are acquired by individuals from their own fathers and fathers-in-law, but whether there may also be a block grant of garden-land by the parent village as a whole to the boys' village as a whole we are not certain. In any case the land of boys' villages is limited, and at the 'coming out' the old men move aside and the young men enter their inheritance. The allotment to each village is

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[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde.

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it is implied that coffee planted in the chiefdoms will be inherited by a man's heirs. As a leading Christian woman put it: 'We like to build on this side of the river because the other is mission land, and if a man moves he loses the coffee and everything else he has planted there. . . . A man has children and he wishes his children to inherit what he has planted.' The number of coffee-trees each man may plant on mission land is also limited to 100, so that the development of large plantations, such as some astute Nyakyusa are undertaking, is impossible there.

b. Building

When a group of boys starts a new village two or three friends usually combine to erect a little hut and live in it together. As younger boys join the village the older ones instruct and help their juniors to build. Thus, although as they grow older each boy builds a hut for himself, the habit of co-operation with village-mates in construction is already established. Until they are married, boys do all the work on their huts for themselves, fetching their own reeds or bamboos for the frame, and cutting and carrying thatching grass. They usually leave their huts unmudded. Adult men, on the other hand, are helped by their wives and female relatives as well as by sons and sons-in-law, and one or two of their own village neighbours. Men fell the bamboos, construct the framework of the house, and thatch, while women cut and carry grass, carry bamboos, mould the mud bricks which are packed between the bamboo uprights, and plaster the hut inside. The wife for whom the hut is being built is responsible for the women's work, but she usually gets some help from her co-wives and women neighbours, as well as from her mother and sisters, and the mother and sisters of her husband. Sons and sons-in-law are expected to bring with them other young men, their village-mates. Co-operation is thus both with relatives and village neighbours—the neighbours of the couple building the hut, and of their sons and sons-in-law.

The huts of married men are built with immense care, for not only are substantial houses essential to comfort, and indeed a condition of survival, in this climate of torrential rains and cold winter mists, but the Nyakyusa take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads (*vide infra*, p. 77). The early European

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travellers in the area all comment on the excellently built huts and the cleanness of the villages.[1] Lord Lugard calls their huts 'the neatest and the most wonderfully built of any I have seen in Africa, excepting only the houses of the king and chiefs in Uganda.'[2] This high standard of building necessitates hard work and co-operation between a number of men and women.

c. Cultivation

The primary unit in cultivation is the elementary family consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children or, in the case of a polygynous family, of the house group of a wife and her children, together with her husband, part of whose time is spent in hoeing her fields.[3] There is also, however, some co-operation with other relatives, and with village neighbours.

Unmarried sons hoe with their fathers and very often they bring one or more village-mates to work with them, making return, in due course, by working with these friends for their respective fathers. The boys who come are fed after hoeing, and should be fed generously, by the woman in whose fields they have worked. After his betrothal a young man comes in the same way with village-mates to hoe for his father-in-law, as well as continuing to hoe for his own father. Once his wife joins him they have their own fields, and the bulk of his time is spent in hoeing for her, but he still hoes one or two strips (*embaka*) for his own father and for his father-in-law. Such help is reciprocal, for his 'mothers' (i.e. his own mother and his father's other wives) and sisters, as well as the 'mothers' and sisters of his wife, will help his wife with her tasks of sowing, weeding, and reaping. From the point of view of village organization the essential fact is that young men working for fathers and fathers-in-law very frequently bring one or two village-mates with them. A typical hoeing group is made up of a man with his sons, and one or two village-mates of the sons.

Larger hoeing parties, to which not only youths, but also older men come, are fairly common, especially among the Kukwe.

[1] Elton, op. cit., p. 323; D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-lakes north of Lake Nyasa' in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 116–7.

[2] F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), Vol. I, p. 52.

[3] The respective rights of the husband and of each wife have been analysed by Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., pp. 16–29.

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241 476 To these come some of a man's village-mates and male relatives or special friends from other villages, as well as his sons and sons-in-law with their village-mates. At one such party we noted in the morning eight helpers, of which six were men, two being classificatory brothers of the owner and four of them friends. There were also two young sons of the owner working. In the afternoon a son-in-law came with a party of his village-mates. Such hoeing parties are not the concern of the whole village. Only those who have been specially invited, or very close friends of the owner of the field, come (the number usually ranging between ten and twenty), and some of those invited may be from other villages. It is difficult for one to whom an invitation has been sent to refuse. After work the guests are feasted. Traditionally they were given milk with bananas or beans (a prized food), but nowadays beer is expected. For the party noted above two pots of beer were provided, one being given to the older men and the other to the son-in-law with his friends. Christians, many of whom are forbidden to brew beer, provide meat, rice, or milk —all much prized foods. Possibly the proportion of men attending this type of work party has diminished as opportunity for paid employment has increased—we have no certain evidence.

Mutual assistance in cultivation turns on kinship and personal friendship: all the members of a village or a village-section are not obliged to work with a neighbour. But it is insisted that neighbours should keep in step with one another in cultivation. It will be remembered that their garden-lands are together, and each year different types of garden are hoed by groups of villagers—millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins in one place, potatoes in another, maize and beans in another, so that while the gardens of one particular household are scattered, each crop is in one or two blocks. Neighbours cultivating the same crop in adjoining fields should, according to Nyakyusa ideas, begin each process in cultivation together, and the whole village should keep in step. As one informant put it, 'in hoeing and planting one must be neither ahead of nor behind one's neighbours'.

241 476 622 The idea reaches its furthest development among the Kukwe in regard to three crops planted with the first rains, namely, finger millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins. Traditionally, no Kukwe man might begin to clear ground for these crops until his village headman had begun, or, if he lived in the village of a chief or in

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241 an immediately adjoining village, until his chief had begun. Members of other villages do not regard the chief, but wait only for their village headman to begin. Within the family, junior wives must follow senior wives, but there is no precedence between brothers. If two should live in the same village it does not matter which begins sowing first, provided both follow the leader, nor need a junior age-village wait on a senior one to begin. Not only must the headman of the village begin the clearing, but each process in cultivation must be initiated by him or his senior wife; thus clearing, raking, burning, planting, and reaping, are ceremonially begun, and the wife of the headman should be the first to wash her millet, and he the first to eat of the new crop. Further, once a process is initiated, the villagers should press on with their tasks so that all may finish about the same time.

241 622 Now the cultivation of millet, cow-peas, and pumpkins[1] is peculiar in that the weeds and grass are not turned in for green manure, as they are for all other crops (except rice), but are collected in heaps and burnt, just before the rains break at the end of the dry season. And the fire for this must be lighted ritually by the headman of the village. Using fire-sticks and 'medicine of plenty' (*unkota gwa ifugo*[2]) bought by the Kukwe from the Sangu people, he ignites a special fire in his own field and then, if a great wife of the chief lives in the village, he lights the heaps in her field. All the members of the village take fire from him, or from the field of the chief's wife. To take fire from a house is forbidden, because the owner of the house from which it is taken may be a witch, who will rot the heaps so that the millet does not grow, or will not ripen. Roasting food on a burning heap, or taking a brand to light tobacco is likewise forbidden, lest the person who does so has medicine which will rot the millet.

241 It is thought that if one breaks the rule, beginning a process before the headman, the fields of all the other villagers will suffer. 'If men hoe higgledy piggledy the food in their gardens does not grow, and if they reap higgledy piggledy the yield from all the

[1] Some Kukwe held that these rules about cultivation applied also to maize and to an old root crop, *umbogo*, but the most reliable informants were agreed that the rule was only strictly enforced with regard to the three crops planted 'at the break of the rains, in the new year'.

[2] 'A village headman, *ugwa ifugo*, is one who drives off witches and protects the food.'

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Nyakyusa generally it is kinship groups, not villages, which eat protective medicines with certain first-fruits.

Unlike many other cattle-keeping Bantu the Nyakyusa take great pride in cultivation, men boasting about their strength in hoeing, and praising those who are diligent. Significantly, the vocabulary relating to bananas matches in richness that relating to cattle: we recorded a dozen terms—and there were said to be many more—for varieties of bananas and plantains, which are distinguished by the form and flavour of the fruit, and thirteen terms for types of cattle, distinguished by colour and markings.

Not only does success in cultivation carry prestige in itself, but it provides the wherewithal for hospitality, on which status in a Nyakyusa community turns. To be respected a man must entertain his neighbours with food and millet-beer. Control of grain and vegetables to do this depends upon his own effort in hoeing, as well as upon having wives and sons to work with him. We have seen how the laggard among the Kukwe believes that the fertility of his gardens will be sapped by his neighbours being ahead. There is thus considerable social pressure compelling both men and women to cultivate diligently. At the same time, however, no individual should be too conspicuous. Each must keep in step in cultivation with his neighbours; and though his fields may be a little larger than the average, they must not be a great deal larger. The area cultivated (visible crops and stubble) by seven compound families on the Lake-shore plain in 1935 averaged 6·13 acres per family; which, divided by the number of members in each family, gave rather over half an acre per head (men, women, and children) or 1·3 acres per adult. The acreage ranged from 1·99 to 0·61 per adult.[1]

Cultivation thus involves co-operation primarily within elementary and compound families, but it also involves village co-operation, in that neighbours hold land together, help one another in some measure, and try to carry out each process simultaneously.

The pressure of neighbours still helps to keep laggards up to the mark, and also to keep the most energetic from getting far ahead. But the village control over cultivation is diminishing for, as we have seen, the custom of keeping in step is no longer strictly insisted upon even among the Kukwe, nor does it apply

[1] Monthly report of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu District, July 1933. Figures supplied by the courtesy of the Agricultural Officer, Tukuyu, 1935.

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to those crops, production of which is now expanding—beans, groundnuts, coffee and rice—even though the latter is planted like millet in a seed-bed of ash. The cultivation of rice is on a commercial basis. A small number of men own ploughs which they hire out for preparing rice-fields, and the weeding and reaping is also often done by hired labour. For the hulling, grading, and marketing of coffee the Agricultural Department has established a coffee co-operative, to which all native-grown coffee is sold, but in this organization villages as such play no part.

d. Herding

In each village there are, as we have seen, several herd-groups, five to ten neighbours herding their cattle together. This association is voluntary, but it is usual for members of adjoining homesteads to co-operate—special friends in a village tend to build together—and the group is more or less stable. All the boys of appropriate age (six to eleven) go to herd, even though there is one son of their father already in the group, and when a man has cattle, but no sons of an age to herd, he may leave his cattle to be looked after by the sons of neighbours. As one old man put it: 'My cows are herded by other men's sons, but I give them neither milk nor payment, it is not done in this country. When I beget a son he will herd too.' There is thus considerable give-and-take between fellow members of the group. Among Christians, and those pagans who wish their sons to go to school, the herds take shifts, half attending the morning session of school, and half the afternoon session. Formerly, young men armed with spears herded the cattle for fear of raids, while boys herded the calves which grazed near the villages. The same young men used to herd and hoe, taking it in turn, or hoeing in the late afternoon when the cattle grazed near the villages and could be herded by the youngsters. The cattle were trained to follow the call of a herdsman and in case of danger were quickly led away and hidden.[1]

In the large villages of the plain an assistant headman, one of whose functions is the care of cattle, is connected with each herd-group. In his homestead, under the bananas, a smoky fire is kept going during the heat of the day, and there the cattle of the group

[1] D. Kerr-Cross, op. cit., p. 121; F. L. M. Moir, op. cit., p. 93.

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stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ugwakyemo*, *vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so." ' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle may in that way escape danger. Porokoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ukufufya*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which gores others may be herded apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

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find the cleaning of byres in which many cattle are stalled, very arduous. A pagan who has many cattle always has more than one wife.

Thus, herding together was traditionally, and still is, one of the main common activities of neighbours in a village; most cattle are herded with those of neighbours, but there is a measure of co-operation with relatives and personal friends of other villages. It is likely that the practice of placing cattle with friends of other villages is becoming more common.

e. Hunting and fishing

From the point of view of village co-operation, hunting and fishing are relatively unimportant, for, in the first place, game and fish provide the Nyakyusa with prized foods to eat as relish with the staple bananas, roots, and cereals, rather than with main items of diet; and secondly, hunting and fishing are not primarily village enterprises.

Most fishing is done by men, individually, each keeping his own catch; but groups of herd-boys or young men sometimes co-operate to divert a branch of a stream temporarily, so that they may tickle the fish stranded in the shallow pools. They choose a place where a stream divides naturally, and block one channel with stones; but such enterprises are on a small scale. Periodically however, when fish were plentiful, communal fishing was organized during the dry season. The seeds of a certain legume, grown for the purpose, were thrown into the river to stupefy the fish. Men, women, and children waited some way down the stream with hand-nets, and when, an hour or two after the poison had been put in, the fish began to float down stupefied, they were easily netted. The poisoning was organized by the chief and village headmen and all the villages of the chiefdom participated, as well as those from neighbouring chiefdoms, when their chiefs were on good terms. Friends naturally went together, but the various villages did not act as separate units as they do in a communal hunt. Communal fishing never occurred regularly, for if fish were scarce the chief might forbid it for a number of years, and it is now rare, since poisoning the rivers has been forbidden by the Administration. We heard of only one such fishing during our stay in Nyakyusa country.

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f. Housekeeping

Every married woman has her own hearth and granary, and she works very largely alone when cooking and cleaning; but in one essential activity women who are neighbours in a village regularly co-operate, and that is in fetching firewood. We never saw a woman going alone; usually there is a group of three or four up to a dozen or more. Firewood must be fetched two or three times a week, and the journey and the collection of the wood takes from four to ten hours, depending upon the distance of the village from a patch of forest or bush. Thus the women spend up to thirty hours a week fetching wood, and it is with village neighbours that this time is spent, not with relatives from other villages. If a woman is ill her friends will help in bringing wood and cooked food for her. Some co-wives co-operate in this way, fetching wood together, and helping each other in sickness, but whether they do or not depends upon personal friendship. Often it is with an unrelated neighbour, rather than with a co-wife, that a woman works most closely. Only when co-wives are sisters, or aunt and niece, are they expected to work together regularly.

Village neighbours—women—also co-operate in the preparation of feasts, as we shall see in the following chapter.

g. Economic co-operation beyond the village

The economic relations of fellow villagers, and the changes taking place in these relations, cannot be understood without some reference to economic co-operation beyond the village boundaries. As we have already indicated, co-operation with relatives living in other villages is very important: cattle, the most prized possession of the Nyakyusa, circulate within kinship groups, between father and son, brother and brother, and between affines, and these same relatives assist one another in cultivation and building. But beyond the circle of kinsmen and village-mates there was formerly little economic co-operation. Each village and kinship group was largely self-sufficient, buying from outside little save iron spears and hoes, medicines, salt, cosmetics, and brass or copper wire for ornament.

Smiths were essential to the Nyakyusa economy for they

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Economic co-operation beyond the village has therefore increased enormously, and this is correlated with a decrease in economic co-operation within the village. The change is most obvious in the case of migrant labourers who, while remaining members of their villages (for they are domiciled there) cease, during the period they are at labour centres, to co-operate with their village neighbours in building, herding, hoeing and hunting; and those of their wives who accompany them are also withdrawn from village activities.

Of the men in paid employment within the district, some, such as house servants, police, hospital orderlies, and clerks attached to the Government station, are very largely withdrawn from economic co-operation in their villages; and even labourers employed on European estates, who still cultivate for themselves, and those who meet essential expenses by growing cash crops on their own account, co-operate less with their village neighbours than was customary in the old days.

As we have seen there is no village co-operation in the production of the main cash crops—rice and coffee—such as there was in the cultivation of three of the main food crops; therefore those who grow cash crops spend a smaller proportion of their time working with their neighbours than their fathers did. Moreover, the cultivation of cash crops encourages the development of hired labour at the expense of work parties attended by neighbours. In effect, the cultivation of cash crops involves less village co-operation than did the traditional cultivation of food crops, and in so far as men's energies are directed into producing cash crops, village co-operation becomes relatively less important.

We argue that while traditionally there was considerable co-operation in production between fellow villagers, that co-operation is diminishing, and its diminution is correlated with employment for wages and the production of crops for sale. The more educated the individual the more time he is likely to spend working outside his village, and the less he co-operates in economic activities with his fellow villagers.

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621 land in each generation. The territorial segregation of fathers and
561 sons is directly dependent upon the shifting of the old men after
178 the 'coming out' ceremony, without which the young men would not have sufficient land to establish themselves as a compact group on land adequate to support their growing families. Where no redistribution of land takes place, as on mission land and in the chiefdoms where the 'coming out' ceremony has been dropped, the territorial division between age groups becomes blurred within a generation.

621 Redistribution of land in each generation depends upon two
425 further conditions: the existence of ample land to support the
423 population, and relatively little development of land. As soon as
178 land becomes scarce those in possession of it are reluctant to agree to redistribution. It is significant that the most valuable land of all in Nyakyusa country—that in old craters—is *not* redistributed at a 'coming out' ceremony, but is retained by an individual until his death, and then inherited by kinsmen. And as soon as improvements are made in the form of planting long-term crops, or building durable and expensive houses, the difficulties of redistribution are increased. Nyakyusa land-law recognized the right of an elder who had moved, or of his son, to the bamboos and *imisyunguti* trees he had planted (*vide supra*, p. 46). But such rights become much more complicated when it is not only an odd clump of bamboos or two or three trees which are at stake, but a large patch of coffee; or when, in place of the old-fashioned long hut (*ikibaga*) built with the co-operation of kinsmen and neighbours, there is a more substantial house with expensive doors and windows made by an expert carpenter. It has been shown that where individual rights over trees or other long-term crops are recognized, and such crops are planted on a large scale, individual tenure of land, as opposed to a temporary right of usufruct, tends to develop.[1]

621 Secondly, the solidarity of the Nyakyusa age-village, as of
● 476 kinship villages in other African societies, is a function of a small-
178 scale society. Fellow villagers have been hitherto, and are still in a large measure, dependent upon one another for land, for aid in economic undertakings, for sympathy and good fellowship, and for protection 'by night and by day'. But such mutual dependence is visibly decreasing. In the economic field co-opera-

[1] C. K. Meek, *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies*, p. 28.

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tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most important of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amanga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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241 789 other women take fire from the lighted heap, and kindle their own, first setting the torch to the large heap which contains the medicine, the virtue of which is carried to all the other heaps as they are set alight one by one.

There is a custom, now passing away, but still followed by a few, of throwing medicine into the ground as one hoes. Many use manure for fertilisation, but the medicines I am speaking of have no manure qualities. They are *unkota*, something possessing mysterious powers, the virtues of which are known by experience, but are not open to rational explanation. One of the best-known medicines of this kind is elephant manure, dried and set on fire, and the smoke allowed to spread over the garden. Where this is used it insures a bumper crop.

Not even yet, however, is all ready, for the seed must be doctored before being sown. A medium-sized basket is taken, and plastered on the inside with the drug, which, of course, has been obtained from the local doctor, who at this season does a roaring trade. Into the basket the seed is put, mixed with more medicine, and then sown. The object in this case is not, however, to secure a good crop, but to prevent the yield being interfered with. If even a sorcerer steals from that garden, he will sicken, and probably die; or a disease will eat up his lips, and he will stand revealed to all men for what he is, a garden thief, and, it may be, a sorcerer as well.

241 476 Working parties are often formed for the hoeing, the group spending one day in each garden, and being

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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fed by the owner in each case. When a headman's garden is being done, beer is provided, and the chief usually kills an ox when he has a party hoeing for him. The main crops are maize, cassava, millet, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground nuts, but many other food-stuffs are cultivated. Every village is hidden in groves of bananas, which need regular tending. Rice is grown for the market, and in the Kinga Mountains large quantities of wheat are cultivated. Every man owns his clump of bamboos; many have a few kapok trees, some mangoes, one or two lemon trees; and some European fruits are slowly spreading to native gardens. A few cultivate kitchen vegetables, but only for sale to the white man.

In a few places I have seen intelligently conceived irrigation, but never on a large scale, each man attending to his own needs in the matter.

Growing crops must be protected from numerous pests. Boys are stationed by day to drive off monkeys; straying cattle eating the crops involve their owner in damages: elephants, no rare visitors in some districts, are driven off by drum and horn and wild shouting when they pay no attention to the small sticks which are placed in a corner of the garden to keep them away. Pigs are very fond of growing maize; and where they are numerous, small huts, elevated on poles, are built in the gardens, and there the young men sleep and keep an open ear for the grunting which betrays the presence of the spoilers. Then one may hear the long shout of the watchers, who add to their shouting the rattling of dried gourds strung on cords

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all except his own mother, whom he either builds for at a little distance and looks after, or else gives to a half-brother.[1] Inherited wives have the same land rights as others, and a mother for whom a son builds and hoes is treated by him, in the matter of land, just like a wife.

And a married man often supports an old woman—a mother, mother-in-law or elder sister—whose husband, though still alive, is incapable of hoeing and who has no unmarried sons. He may either hoe for her on her own husband's land or else assign to her a plot or two of his own.

The gardens of a household are not only worked by its members, other people assist them from time to time. Each married man usually invites a group of his village neighbours to help him with a day's hoeing two or three times a year, entertaining them to food and beer after the work is over. A married woman likewise is often assisted by women friends from neighbouring households in the planting, weeding or reaping of her crops and them she rewards simply with a luxurious meal in the evening, without any beer. Again, as we have seen, a married woman sometimes engages a young man to hoe for her regularly, for a month or more at a time, and pays him by feeding him well for that period.

But although this last custom is still common it is beginning to decline; fewer men each year are willing to work for any length of time except for money, and already in some of the more prosperous households young men are found to be employed in hoeing at the rate of 2/- a month in addition to their food. The young men who thus accept employment in hoeing are always the poor ones, those for whom (whether because their fathers are poor in cattle or because they have many elder brothers before them) the prospect of getting married is too distant to stimulate them to any great diligence at home. In the plain of Mungonde, however, where ploughs are extensively used, the owners of ploughs make a considerable profit by hiring themselves out with their ploughs at 2/- a plot (*ulupaka*).

Kinsmen and affines also often assist in a household's hoeing. When a man inherits his dead father's wealth then he assumes the position of father towards his own younger brothers and is responsible for the marriages of any who are bachelors; they then hoe for him and are fed by his wives just as unmarried sons do. Sons-in-law, again, are expected to bring their friends now and then to help their father-in-law in hoeing and they often do so, more particularly if they are behindhand with the marriage-cattle. After the day's work is over, however, they are entertained just as sumptuously as an ordinary work-party of neighbours.

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[1] And any kinswoman of his mother (sister or niece) whom his father has married is treated likewise.

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643 652 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household. 643 651 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu as was the bringing of royal tusks to him, for the belief in his rain-making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease, as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of displeasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 651 565 622 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe, accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs. But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but only of the Kyungu."

651 241 476 273 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalesi*) for beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles[1] who had brought men to hoe[2] them were summoned to taste "the beer of the *mulasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

[1] It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who had worked or only the more important among them.

[2] I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted, however, to find this out.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization.

After the local chiefs had finished the *mulasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *milasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forgot to hoe for Mwakasungula then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)"

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them.

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt[1].

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *valukuta*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde

[1] *Vide infra* sections 5 and 6.

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marriages of his kinswomen. When his father dies his father's wives and cows pass to his father's full-brother, but they come to him and his brother eventually when this man dies. While, if the young chiefs have " come out " it is common for their father's brother to hand over some, or even the bulk of the cattle, to them before his own death. And in his own half of the family, among his siblings and half-siblings on that side, a chief has far greater rights both of inheritance and of receiving marriage-cattle, than those possessed by the senior son of a commoner. So much is clear from my evidence, but it is not yet sufficiently detailed for an exact statement of rules.

Before 1893 fighting between chiefdoms was common and, except between brother chiefs, the usual aim of fighting was, not conquest, but cows ; wars were generally just cattle raids. And a substantial proportion of the cows captured in a successful raid went to increase the herds of the chief. This lost source of income is now supplied by Government salaries, which vary from 5/- to £15 a month.[19] The price of a cow is £2; but many shillings are spent on clothes, bicycles and beer, as well as on cows.

A chief, like any other rich man, maintains his prestige by hospitality, he constantly entertains his more notable subjects with beer, at the ceremonies of his family all his people gather in their age-villages and he kills cattle for them to eat. Chiefs seldom nowadays kill cattle except on ceremonial occasions, but in the old days of warfare they used also, I am told, to entertain their subjects with meat from time to time, in order to keep up their spirits for fighting. History is full of stories of Nyakyusa chiefs who attracted many men to their countries, and so gained great military strength, by the generosity and abundance of their feasts.

Every time a man or woman dies, a message must be sent to the chief, and at the burial he is given the whole breast and ribs (*akakua*) of one of the cows which are killed by the family of the dead person at that time. He has the right to take food or milk from any of his subjects if he has need of it ; but he cannot take any man's beast without later returning another to him.

Apart from the now abandoned pursuit of cattle raiding the only profitable enterprizes in which the members of a whole chiefdom jointly participate are those of hunting and fishing ; in some chiefdoms, but not

[19] Salaries above £1 a month are only paid to senior chiefs. No minor chief gets a Government salary, nor do great-commoners. The local value of money is shown (a) by the tax (8/- p.a.), (b) by the wages of unskilled labour (6/- to 8/- p.m.)

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476 all, hunting is organized like warfare and fishing is a joint endeavour, both ordered by the chief.

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622 Every chief has a title of ownership (*obusene nakyo*) to the land of his chiefdom and can evict any man he pleases, (giving him another plot), if he wishes to build there himself; but his people also have titles of ownership to it, both collectively, under the leadership of the great commoners, and individually, each man to his own ground. It is the great commoners who, in consultation with their neighbours, give to the sons of each village land on which to build; it is they who, together, finally fix the boundaries of the young men's villages at their "Coming Out;" it is they who, again in consultation with their neighbours, grant land to strangers who ask for it, though they must notify the chief and get his approval before doing so.

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692 As the single great commoners settle disputes within their own villages so the chief and great commoners together hear and decide cases within the chiefdom. Many of these legal actions are now settled in the Courts, but not all of them; and, even when cases are going to Court, preliminary hearings commonly take place before the chief, first. Cases are conducted and witnesses interrogated by chief and great commoners together, and the decision which the chief pronounces is an expression of their general opinion.

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624 Among the great commoners there is an order of seniority. The leaders of the two senior age-villages of the chief's own men play a prominent part at his "Coming Out," they each have a pre-eminent authority in one side of his chiefdom, and the other great commoners rank as their juniors, some on one side, some on the other. In the old days the two senior great commoners each led a whole side of the chiefdom in war.

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754 The two most effective checks on the power of a chief are migration and witchcraft. Military strength used to depend upon the number of a chief's adherents, to-day the scale of his salary is similarly dependent; men are quite free to move, and there is a constant flow of adherents from unpopular to popular chiefs. But unpopularity is most feared in its spiritual form of witchcraft. We have seen already that an adverse current of opinion is believed to act invisibly, as the "breath of men," against an unpopular member of a village and to make him sick. So also the adverse opinion of a single village or of a whole chiefdom is believed to have power against a chief, to bring sickness or even death upon him. As in the single village, so in the whole chiefdom the great commoners are the prime sources of this spiritual power; they are believed severally to protect the members of their own villages and jointly to protect their